

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9562
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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TAGS: IS, EG, XF
SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTION TO SADAT INVITATION

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT QUICKLY ACCEPTED
PRESIDENT SADAT'S INVITATION TO A GENEVA PREPARATORY MEETING
IN CARIO. IT DID SO IN FULL AWARENESS THAT NOT ALL PARTIC-
IPANTS WOULD BE PRESENT -- THIS REFLECTS BEGIN'S AGREEMENT
WITH SADAT'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM. COMMENTATORS AND
EDITORIALISTS BELIEVE THE INVITATION REINFORCES THE NEED FOR
ISRAEL TO RETHINK ITS POSITIONS. END SUMMARY.

1.THE GOI REACTED UNUSUALLY QUICKLY TO THE INVITATION EX-
TENDED BY PRESIDENT SADAT IN HIS SPEECH TO THE PEOPLE'S
ASSEMBLY. A MEETING OF SENIOR MINISTERS WAS CONVENED LATE
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SATURDAY EVENING AT THE PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE IN
JERUSALEM; PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED BEGIN, YADIN, DAYAN,
WEIZMAN, EHRLICH, SHARON, BURG AND HOROWITZ (I.E., ALL
POLITICAL FACTIONS IN THE CABINET). AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE MEETING, THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS SPOKESMAN READ
THE FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT: "WHEN THE OFFICIAL INVITATION
OF THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER REACHES JERUSALEM, THE

CABINET WILL DECIDE WHOM TO AUTHORIZE TO REPRESENT IT AT THE CAIRO TALKS. THE DEMANDS OF THE PRESIDENT OF EGYPT FOR THE WITHDRAWAL BY ISRAEL TO THE LINES OF JUNE 4, 1967, AND FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE CONTRADICT THE POSITION OF ISRAEL. THIS POSITION, SUPPORTED BY MORE THAN 100 OUT OF 120 MEMBERS OF THE KNESSET, WILL CONTINUE TO SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR ANY NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONCLUDING THE PEACE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EACH OF ITS NEIGHBORS. AS AGREED BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL, SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT PRIOR CONDITIONS FROM ANY SIDE."

2. THE SUBJECT WILL, OF COURSE, ALSO BE DISCUSSED AT THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE FULL CABINET THIS MORNING. (THAT MEETING WILL NOT INCLUDE DAYAN, WHO DEPARTED THIS MORNING FOR HIS VISIT TO WEST GERMANY.) MEANWHILE, SPECULATION HAS BEGUN REGARDING ISRAEL'S PARTICIPANTS IN THE CAIRO MEETING. IT IS ASSUMED THAT IF THE MEETING IS AT EXPERTS OR SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE LEVEL RATHER THAN MINISTERIAL LEVEL, THE ISRAELI DELEGATION WOULD BE LED BY ELIAHU BEN-ELISSAR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, OR EPHRAIM EVRON, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, OR BOTH. OTHER NAMES MENTIONED ARE AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE MORDECHAI GAZIT (WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE ISRAELI DELEGATION AT THE FIRST GENEVA CONFERENCE) AND MFA ASSISTANCE DIRECTOR GENERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MOSHE SASSON. HOWEVER, THE USUALLY WELL INFORMED HARIF AND ZIMULKI WRITE IN MASRIV AND YEDIOT AHARANOT TODAY THAT IT WAS DECIDED THAT DAYAN WOULD LEAD THE ISRAELI DELEGATION.

3. ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION IS MADE IN FULL AWARENESS THAT NOT ALL OTHER INVITEES WILL LIKELY ACCEPT THE INVITATION. IT HAS BEEN NOTED THAT SYRIA HAS ALREADY DECLINED, THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND JORDAN HAVE BEEN SILENT AND ARE FACED WITH DIFFICULT DECISIONS, AND THAT THE PROPOSED MEETING MAY WELL BE CONVENED WITH ONLY ISRAEL, EGYPT, THE U.S. AND SOME PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. THE PLO IS EXPECTED TO REJECT THE INVITATION. IN FACT, DAYAN SAID IN AN INTERVIEW AT THE AIRPORT ON DEPARTURE THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IF THE PLO WERE THERE. MASRIV PUT A DIFFERENT TUNING ON THIS ASPECT OF THE MEETING WHEN IT REPORTED THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT DEAL WITH ANY PLO REPRESENTATIVES EVEN "IF THEY MIGHT BE IN CAIRO."

4. THE WILLINGNESS OF ISRAEL TO GO TO CAIRO REGARDLESS OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE OTHER INVITEES COMES AS NO SUR-

PRISE AND ILLUSTRATES ISRAELI AWARENESS OF SADAT'S INTENT TO PRESS AHEAD AND TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM WHICH HE BELIEVES HAS BEEN BUILT UP BY HIS VISIT. IT ALSO REFLECTS ISRAELI READINESS TO DEAL WITH EGYPT ALONE. WE TAKE BEGIN AT HIS WORD THAT ISRAEL IS NOT TRYING TO SPLIT THE ARABS, BUT THAT WILL NOT PREVENT ISRAEL FROM SEEKING SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT IF THAT IS THE ONLY POSSIBILITY. IN OTHER WORDS, ISRAEL WILL PRESS AHEAD FOR AN ACCOMMODATION WITH EGYPT AND HOPE THAT SYRIAN AND PLO REJECTION OR OBSTINANCE CAN BE IGNORED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING.

5. SADAT'S INVITATION AND THE SPEED WITH WHICH HE APPEARS WILLING TO MOVE TO NEGOTIATIONS ALSO REINFORCES THE VIEW WHICH HAD BEGUN TO SURFACE IN ISRAELI COMMENTS LAST WEEK: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR ISRAEL TO RETHINK ITS POSITIONS AND TO PREPARE FOR MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. DAVAR, FOR EXAMPLE, URGES THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPRESS READINESS FOR WITHDRAWALS ON ALL THREE FRONTS..."THE GOVERNMENT MUST REASSESS ITS STANCE ON THE TERRITORIES." EXPECTEDLY, AL HAMISHMAR ALSO URGES THE GOVERNMENT TO RE-EXAMINE ITS POSITION ON THE TERRITORIES AND THE PALESTINIANS; THE PAPER ALSO EDITORIALIZED THAT SADAT'S INVITATION IS A BREAKTHROUGH TOWARD DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS AND WEAKENS OUTSIDE POWERS AS A MEDIATING ELEMENT. HAARETZ, WHICH HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT MORE CAUTIOUS REGARDING THE ISRAELI/EGYPTIAN DIALOG, ALSO SEES SADAT'S INITIATIVE AS A DESIRE TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE SUPERPOWERS' GUARDIANSHIP AND CALLS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE CLEAR TO SADAT THAT ACCEPTING HIS INVITATION DOES NOT MEAN ACCEPTING HIS VIEWS ON RETURN TO THE '67 LINES, A PALESTINIAN STATE AND JERUSALEM.

6. INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL FIGURES AND OBSERVERS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED OVER THE WEEKEND ALSO CALL FOR ISRAELI REVIEW OF ITS POSITIONS. IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW LAST NIGHT, PERES SAID THAT SADAT'S STEPS ARE LEADING TOWARD FACE-TO-FACE NEGOTIATIONS. "LET US NOT DELUDE OURSELVES. THIS NOW FORCES US TO TAKE DECISIONS AND DRAW PLANS. THIS IS A DARING MOVE AND A FAST PACE. WE SHOULD NOT MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY.". PROFESSOR MORDECHAI ABIR SAID IN A RADIO INTERVIEW THAT SADAT TOLD THE KNESSSET FACTIONS: "YOU HAVE TO TAKE VERY HARD DECISIONS. AND THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DIFFERENT PARTIES REPRESENTED IN THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO DO." EVEN BEGIN HIMSELF SAID TO THE KNESSSET FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY COMMITTEE ON FRIDAY: "WE WILL HAVE TO BREAK OUR HEADS TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF JUDEA AND SAMARIA." ALTHOUGH HE ADDED "IT SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED TO A FOREIGN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REGIME."
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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TAGS: PGOV, MPOL, IS, EG, XF, (SADAT, ANWAR)
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